

**Alma Planning Commission  
October 2, 2007 Regular Meeting**

Chairperson Lambrecht called the regular meeting of the Alma Planning Commission to order at 5:30 p.m. at the Alma Municipal Building.

Present: Lambrecht, Wheeler, Nyman, Moore, Pellerito, Stone & Walkington  
Absent: Moes & Knarr

Also Present: Phil Deja, John Yost, Bryan McCracken, Ron Turner & Brian Dancer

A motion was made by Nyman, supported by Pellerito to approve the September 4, 2007 meeting minutes.

Yes: Lambrecht, Wheeler, Nyman, Moore, Pellerito, Stone & Walkington  
No: None

**Request for Clarification**

Chairperson Lambrecht opened this item of business for discussion. Mr. Bryan McCracken has requested a clarification of the approval of his Special Use Permit on August 7, 2007 for the car wash to be located at 1403 Wright Ave. Specifically, Mr. McCracken is questioning the requirement for a T-turnaround on this site. Mr. Lambrecht stated that the question is what the intention of the Planning Commission was in regards to this matter.

Member Nyman stated that he thought the intent was to require the T-turnaround. Vice Chair Wheeler remembered discussing the issue, the size of the trucks and the scheduling of appointments for these deliveries. Member Stone made the motion to approve the Special Use Permit and remembers stating that Staff Comments were to be included as a part of the approval. Discussion followed.

Mr. Nyman discussed the impacts of this turnaround for the future of this site. Mr. Nyman noted that this site could change ownership in the future and that new ownership might not be as cooperative in regards to how deliveries are made at this site. Discussion followed.

Mr. Wheeler asked Mr. Turner his intent. Mr. Turner stated the intent was to limit turning movements and to make it convenient for delivery trucks to access the site.

Mr. Lambrecht asked Mr. McCracken how often deliveries would occur. Mr. McCracken responded that deliveries are received about once a month.

Member Walkington asked Mr. Turner if there are other vehicles that concern him. Mr. Turner responded – no.

Mr. McCracken stated his opinion that the site plan meets the requirement for turning. He inquired – “If I didn’t own that other lot, would this be required?” Mr. Nyman responded to this question by stating “you might not have gotten the site plan approval”.

Mr. McCracken said that it was the opinion of the majority of people present that the turnaround wasn’t required.

Mr. Lambrecht stated that he doesn’t see this issue as a huge traffic safety concern.

Mr. Walkington asked where the truck would actually unload. Mr. McCracken explained.

Secretary Stasa explained the minutes. Mr. Stasa stated that when Staff Comments are adopted as part of a resolution approving a project it means the written comments that are submitted, usually from the Planning and Zoning Department and the Public Services Department. These comments are adopted as written unless the Planning Commission specifically addresses any of the issues raised. If this occurs, it happens as a part of the motion and is noted in the minutes. In this case, the T-turnaround was a part of Mr. Turner’s written comments and this issue was not addressed in the motion approving the project. Therefore, the requirement for the T-turnaround is a part of the project. Discussion followed.

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Chairperson Lambrecht suggested calling the question. Mr. Nyman questioned where this issue stood from a legal standpoint. Member Pellerito (an attorney) addressed some of the legal points, noting that in questions of this type you refer to the minutes of the meeting to provide the answers.

A motion was made by Wheeler and supported by Walkington to state that the intention of the Planning Commission at its meeting of August 7, 2007 was to exclude the requirement for the T-turnaround in its motion approving the Special Use Permit for 1403 Wright Avenue to develop a car wash at this location.

Mr. Walkington asked Mr. Turner about future traffic movements. Mr. Turner addressed interconnecting parking lots and the Planning Commission's desire to do this, especially along the Wright Avenue and Warwick Drive corridors. Connecting with Pizza Hut was discussed. A discrepancy on legal description was discussed.

Mr. Stasa shared a conversation that he had with Mr. McCracken pointing out the advantage of the T-turnaround. Mr. Stasa stated that he had discussed with Mr. McCracken that someday his other lot will develop and that the pavement for the T-turnaround could be utilized as a part of this development. Discussion followed.

Hearing no further discussion, a voice vote was taken by Chairperson Lambrecht.

Yes: Wheeler, Lambrecht, Pellerito  
No: Walkington, Moore, Nyman, Stone

The motion failed. The T-turnaround is a requirement of the development of the car wash at 1403 Wright Avenue.

**Public Hearing, Special Use Permit, Proposed Automobile Sales Facility at 1300 E. Superior St.**

Chairperson Lambrecht opened the Public Hearing for comment. The applicants, John & Cherie Yost, 508 Fairlane Dr., Alma, MI., propose to construct an automobile sales facility on the southeast corner of Republic Ave. and E. Superior St., on the property commonly referred to as 1300 E. Superior St. The property is zoned B-2, General Business. B-2 does permit automobile sales facilities within its boundaries through the issuance of a Special Use Permit.

Mr. John Yost, applicant, described his project. Mr. Yost stated that he would like to purchase a parcel owned by Ewing's if possible. Mr. Yost stated that he would like to develop a nice site and keep it looking good.

Mr. Hal Smith, Zoning Administrator, addressed Staff Comments. Mr. Smith ran through the variances that will be required to develop this site as proposed. The variances are:

- A variance on the minimum square footage requirement for lots in the B-2 District.
- A variance on the required lot width.
- A variance on the required rear yard setback.
- A sign variance for the proposed setback shown on the site plan.

Mr. Yost stated that he would move his sign to comply with the setback requirements, or he may only use a wall sign for the site. Either way, Mr. Yost stated that he will comply with the setback requirements to avoid needing this variance.

Secretary Stasa addressed additional Staff Comments that the Planning Commission needs to review. These included:

- A modification/waiver on the requirements for a Parking Lot Greenbelt Area. The required greenbelt area is 35 feet. The applicant is proposing 10 feet. Discussion also occurred in regards to having some yews planted within this greenbelt area.

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- A light pole along the northwest side of the site is proposed to be located within the clear vision sight triangle. Mr. Yost stated that this light pole would be moved out of this area.
- A handicap parking sign is required for the barrier free parking space. Mr. Yost stated that he will provide this.
- Staff notes that the sidewalk will need to be ramped to the entry of the office building. Mr. Yost stated that he will do this.
- Snow removal could be an issue for this site unless the sales lot will provide for some type of storage. Mr. Yost stated that there could be some storage for snow at the rear of the site. Mr. Yost also said that if necessary he would use 1 or 2 of the parking spaces for the cars that he is selling.
- Finally, Staff notes that the type and location of the proposed trees for the front of the lot could cause some potential problems. This should be reviewed and discussed. Mr. Yost stated that he will not plant the arborvitae as proposed and will go with some type of smaller ornamental tree.

Mr. Yost also discussed the possibility of extending the sidewalk along Superior Street. Discussion followed.

Member Nyman stated that he is generally in favor of the proposed project.

A motion made by Nyman and supported by Stone to close the public hearing.

Yes: Lambrecht, Wheeler, Nyman, Moore, Pellerito, Stone & Walkington  
No: None

A motion was made by Nyman and supported by Walkington to grant the Special Use Permit for a proposed automobile sales facility at 1300 E. Superior St. The approval is contingent upon the following:

1. The variances as noted above being obtained from the ZBA. The applicant will not need a sign variance if he complies with the setback requirements of the ordinance.
2. The Planning Commission agrees to modify the requirement for a 35 foot parking lot greenbelt area to 10 feet. The applicant agrees to plant yews within this greenbelt area at a spacing of one every 15 feet.
3. The applicant agrees to move the light pole out of the clear vision sight triangle; provide a handicap parking sign; provide a ramped sidewalk into the entrance of the office building; provide appropriate on-site storage for plowed snow; and to plant smaller ornamental trees rather than the proposed arborvitae.
4. The applicant must comply with the Public Services Director's requirements for site drainage.

Yes: Lambrecht, Wheeler, Nyman, Moore, Pellerito, Stone & Walkington  
No: None

**Public Hearing – Rezoning**

Chairperson Lambrecht opened the Public Hearing for comment. A request to rezone the property that lies along the Pine River and is identified in the 2002 City of Alma Master Plan, Future Land Use Map #3 as being developed as Waterfront has been received from the Alma City Commission. The request is to rezone the property to WF, Waterfront District.

Mr. Phillip Moore, Member/City Manager addressed this issue, noting the history of the site and the Waterfront District. Doing this process now may help developers in the future. Mr. Moore noted that any development will be done as a Planned Unit Development; therefore it will be coming back before the Planning Commission.

Mr. Phil Deja from Scotland Oil spoke in favor of the rezoning.

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A motion was made by Walkington and supported by Nyman to close the Public Hearing and recommend to the City Commission to rezone this property.

Yes: Lambrecht, Wheeler, Nyman, Moore, Pellerito, Stone & Walkington  
No: None

**Other Business**

Mr. Moore stated that 3 cities have met to discuss drainage and to possibly establish districts. The goal is to have a draft document for January 2008. Also they will be working on appeals process.

Hearing no further business, Chairperson Lambrecht adjourned the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

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M. Daniel Stasa, Secretary  
Alma Planning Commission